

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Please amend the drawings by substituting the attached pages 1/7 and 2/7 for the original pages 1/7 and 2/7 of Figures.

REMARKS

Claims 1 through 18 are pending in the subject patent application. Claims 1 through 18 have been rejected. The drawings have been objected to. Accordingly, claims 2 through 8 and 10 through 18 have been cancelled, claims 1 and 9 have been amended, and the drawings have been amended, to overcome the grounds of rejection and objection.

The Declaration has also been objected to, because of a pencil correction to the registration number of the undersigned. The Examiner has objected on the grounds that this correction should have been initialed and dated by the inventor. However, the Applicant respectfully points out that, as specified in the MPEP sections cited by the Examiner, the requirement for the inventor to initial and date changes applies only to the Declaration, not to a Power of Attorney which may be attached thereto. The pencil correction to which the Examiner objects is not a part of the Declaration. Instead, it is only a part of a Power of Attorney which is attached to the Declaration. In fact, a Power of Attorney is no longer even required to be filed with an application; a Power of Attorney was only submitted in this case because it is part of an old form which is still used by the Assignee, the employer of the inventor. In filling out the outdated form, the employer mistakenly listed the Customer Number of the undersigned as the registration number. Rather than introduce a faulty Power of Attorney, the registration number was corrected prior to filing the document. The Applicant respectfully points out that, since the correction was not a correction to the Declaration, and since the correction was in fact a correction to a document which is no longer required, there is no reason to submit a new Declaration.

Further, the Declaration as filed contains all of the required information to constitute a complete Declaration, without consideration of the corrected data to which the Examiner objects. Further, as provided by MPEP 602.01 and 602.02, even if a Declaration fails to provide all of the necessary information, such a deficiency can be corrected by the submission of an Application Data Sheet. Finally, according to MPEP 602.02, where all of the necessary information is present, no further Declaration is needed. The Examiner is respectfully reminded that the Application Data Sheet filed with the Declaration contains all of the necessary information for a Declaration, as does the Declaration itself. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully submits that no further Declaration is needed.

Discussion of Amendments to the Claims

Specifically, claims 1 and 9 have been amended to recite an inner collar member which rotates about a vertical axis relative to the outer collar member. Support for these amendments is found in Figures 10, 11, and 12 of the drawings and in the specification at page 12, lines 16 through 20. Further, claims 1 and 9 have been amended to recite that fixed mounting of the collar shaft to the operating rod socket prevents rotation of the shaft in the socket. Support for these amendments is found in Figure 8 of the drawings and in the specification at page 11, lines 23 through 25, and at page 13, lines 1 through 3.

Reconsideration of the rejected claims is respectfully requested in view of these amendments and the arguments below.

Discussion of Amendments to the Drawings

The Examiner has objected to Figures 1, 2, and 3 because some of the reference numerals have incorrect lead lines. Drawings correcting the basis for the Examiner's objection are submitted herewith. Specifically, in Figure 1, the groove 82 has been added; in Figure 2, the reference numeral 8 next to the lead line leading to the fork 81 has been change from 8 to 81; and in Figure 3, the lead line from the reference numeral 82 has been extended to the groove 82. The Applicant has not discovered any further such discrepancies. The Applicant respectfully points out that none of these corrections address parts of the apparatus that are recited in, or pertinent to, the claims.

Discussion of Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1 through 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Callegari in view of Carmes. The Examiner contends that Carmes discloses connector assemblies as recited in the present claims. The Examiner further contends that Carmes discloses a collar bore element 31 which can pivot relative to collar 30. The Examiner also contends that the vertical shaft in Carmes is fixedly mounted in the socket bore, but the Examiner recognizes that this mounting is fixed only in the vertical and lateral directions. The Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1 and 9 overcome this rejection.

Carmes in fact discloses that the “resilient hinge” 31, which is clearly a straight bushing, only gives the point 16 a limited amount of freedom to be displaced vertically. There is clearly

no way for the bushing 31 to pivot about its vertical axis relative to the pivot 30. Further, there is no suggestion in Carmes that the bushing 31 could pivot about its vertical axis at all. If the bushing 31 can indeed pivot about its vertical axis, it clearly must pivot in unison with the pivot 30, not relative to the pivot 30.

Also, it is clear from the Carmes drawings that the shaft of the pivot 30 is held in the socket bore by a clip of the type designed to fit in an annular groove on the shaft. This would allow the shaft of the pivot 30 to rotate within the socket bore, as the Examiner has noticed. If the bushing 31 and the pivot 30 do indeed pivot about the vertical axis, it is this pivotable mounting of the pivot 30 in the socket bore that allows the bore of the pivot 30 to pivot about its vertical axis, not pivoting of the bushing 31 about its vertical axis relative to the pivot 30.

Claims 1 and 9 of the present application recite that the vertical shaft cannot rotate relative to the socket bore, and that the inner collar member pivots about its vertical axis relative to the outer collar member. Carmes neither discloses nor suggests these features.

Consequently, claims 1 and 9 avoid a prima facie showing of obviousness with respect to the cited combination of references.

The Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1 and 9 are patentable, and that the application is now in a condition for allowance. An early Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. The Examiner is requested to call the undersigned at (360)599-2285 for any reason that would advance the instant application to issue.

Dated this 18th day of August, 2005.

Respectfully submitted,



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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING UNDER 37 CFR § 1.8

I hereby certify that this Response to Office Action is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail, postage prepaid, in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P. O. Box 1450, Alexandria VA 22313-1450, on this, the 18th day of August, 2005.

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